

## **15 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

This chapter contains a discussion of current knowledge about cultural resources in the vicinity of the Patterson mine site and surrounding areas. The purpose of this chapter is to present the current cultural resources setting and evaluate the potential impacts resulting from development of the proposed mine expansion project. Information included in this chapter is based on data obtained through review of existing documents, a records search, and surveys conducted by Jensen & Associates in 1996 and Peak & Associates in 2001 (Appendix I).

### **15.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS**

#### **PREHISTORIC BACKGROUND**

The Southern Maidu lived in the upper portions of the Yuba, Bear, American, and Cosumnes river watersheds. Their villages would range in size from 15–25 people to more than 500 people. A large settlement consisted of a major village and associated smaller camps. Villages were located on ridges and flats along the major streams and rivers and were inhabited mainly during the winter months. During the hot summer months, Southern Maidu would move to temporary camps in higher elevations. Women and children were responsible primarily for gathering pine nuts and numerous other species of nuts, roots, and berries, and men were responsible for the hunting and fishing (Peak & Associates 2001).

#### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Before the Gold Rush period, fur trappers and Spanish and Mexican explorers came to the northern Sacramento Valley, including the Bear River area, and helped scout the route for the overland trail from the Mississippi River to California (Jensen & Associates 1996). The main branch of the California Emigrant Trail, used by emigrants coming to California, is located immediately north of the proposed Patterson mine expansion area (Jensen & Associates 1996, Peak & Associates 2001). Pablo Gutierrez, an employee for John Sutter, was awarded land along the Bear River in the vicinity of the mine site. Upon his death in 1844, the land was purchased by William Johnson and Sebastian Kayser. Johnson's half of the property, known as Johnson's Ranch, was located where the California Emigrant Trail terminated and was the first Euroamerican settlement encountered by travelers along the trail, who included the survivors of the Donner Party (Peak & Associates 2001).

#### **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

A records search for the proposed mine expansion area was conducted by the North Central Information Center (NCIC) at California State University, Sacramento, on June 15, 2001. This records research included a review of the California Historical Resources Information System, which lists sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), California Historical Landmarks, and other government-designated cultural resource sites. The records search also included a review of NCIC maps and files of the findings of previous cultural resource surveys conducted in the project area. The search identified Johnson's Ranch, the Overland Emigrant Trail, Durst House, Johnson's Crossing, the U.S.

Army's Camp Far West, and the Camp Far West Cemetery. None of these historic resources are located within the proposed mine expansion area (Peak & Associates 2001).

Archaeological field surveys of the project site were conducted by Jensen & Associates in April 1996 and by Peak & Associates in August 2001. The survey conducted by Jensen & Associates included a portion of the proposed mine expansion area. No cultural resources were identified within this survey area. Peak & Associates also conducted field surveys of the proposed mine expansion area. No cultural resources were discovered (Peak & Associates 2001).

## **15.2 REGULATORY BACKGROUND**

### **HISTORICAL RESOURCES**

State CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(a) defines historical resources as follows:

- ▶ resources listed, or determined by the State Historical Resources Commission to be eligible for listing, in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR);
- ▶ resources included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in PRC §5020.1(k), or identified as significant in an historical resource survey meeting the requirements of PRC §5024.1(g); and
- ▶ objects, buildings, structures, sites, areas, places, records, or manuscripts that a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California, provided that the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record.

A resource generally shall be considered by the lead agency to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing in the CRHR (PRC §5024.1, CCR §4852). The resource may be eligible for inclusion in the CRHR if it:

- ▶ is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
- ▶ is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
- ▶ embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
- ▶ has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

According to State CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(a)(4), the fact that a resource is not listed, or determined to be eligible for listing, in the CRHR; is not included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant to PRC §5020.1(k)); or is not identified in a historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in PRC §5024.1(g)) does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource

may be a historical resource as defined in PRC §5020.1(j) or §5024.1.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

When a proposed project would affect an archaeological site, a lead agency shall first determine whether the site is a historical resource as defined in State CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(a). Archaeological resources not otherwise determined to be historical resources may be significant if they are unique (State CEQA Guidelines §15064.5). Under PRC §21083.2, a unique archaeological resource is defined as an archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that the resource:

- ▶ contains information needed to answer important scientific questions for which there is a demonstrable public interest;
- ▶ has a special and particular quality, such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type; or
- ▶ is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

According to §15064.5 of the State CEQA Guidelines, all human remains are significant.

A nonunique archaeological resource means an archaeological artifact, object, or site that does not meet the above criteria. Nonunique archaeological resources receive no further consideration under CEQA.

## **15.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

### **THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project would have a significant impact related to cultural resources if it would:

- ▶ cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in [State CEQA Guidelines] §15064.5;
- ▶ cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5;
- ▶ directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature; or
- ▶ disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

## **PROJECT IMPACTS**

Impact  
15-1

**Disturbance of Surface Cultural Resources.** *No known archaeological or historic sites occur within the proposed mine expansion area, based on the records and literature search conducted by the NCIC and field surveys conducted by Jensen & Associates (1996) and Peak & Associates (2001). This impact is considered **less than significant**.*

Based on the records and literature search conducted by the NCIC, no evidence of significant prehistoric or historic resources was found within the proposed mine expansion area. No resources listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or CRHR are known in the proposed mine expansion area. The nearest historic site to the mine site is the Camp Far West cemetery, located approximately one-third mile north of the proposed expansion area.

As described above, field surveys were conducted within the proposed mine expansion area. Based on the field surveys, no surface cultural resources are present within this area (Jensen & Associates 1996, Peak & Associates 2001). This impact is considered less than significant.

Impact  
15-2

**Disturbance of Subsurface Cultural Resources.** *No cultural resources are known to exist within the proposed mine expansion area, based on the records and literature search conducted by the NCIC and field surveys conducted by Jensen & Associates (1996) and Peak & Associates (2001). However, mining and reclamation activities could result in the disturbance of previously unknown subsurface cultural resources. This impact is considered **significant**.*

Based on the records and literature search conducted by the NCIC, as well as field surveys and observations, no evidence of significant cultural resources was found within the proposed mine expansion area, as described above (Jensen & Associates 1996, Peak & Associates 2001). Although the literature review and field visits found no evidence of cultural resources within the proposed mine expansion area, previously undiscovered subsurface cultural resources could be unearthed during mining and reclamation activities. Therefore, this impact is considered significant.

### **15.4 MITIGATION MEASURES**

No mitigation measures are necessary for the following *less-than-significant* impact.

15-1: Disturbance of Surface Cultural Resources

A mitigation measure is provided below for the *significant* impact of the proposed project.

**Mitigation Measure R15-2: Protect Previously Unknown Cultural Resources.** The applicant shall implement the following measures to reduce project impacts on subsurface cultural resources:

- In the event that previously unknown archaeological resources are discovered during any land alteration activities, the mining or construction crew shall immediately cease work in the immediate area. A qualified archaeologist approved by Placer County

shall be consulted to evaluate the resource in accordance with state and federal guidelines. Mitigation measures consistent with State CEQA Guidelines §21083.2 shall be devised and a mitigation plan shall be submitted to Placer County for approval. All archaeological excavation and monitoring activities shall be conducted in accordance with prevailing professional standards as outlined in State CEQA Guidelines §21083.2. Mitigation, in accordance with a plan approved by Placer County, shall be implemented before commencement of work within the area of the resource find.

- ▶ In the event that human remains are discovered, the Placer County Coroner shall be contacted in accordance with California Health and Safety Code §7050.5. As cited in State CEQA Guidelines §15064.5, if the coroner determines that remains represent Native American interment, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) in Sacramento shall be consulted to identify the most likely descendants and the appropriate disposition of the remains. Consultation with descendants shall occur as directed by the NAHC.

## **15.5 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION**

Following implementation of the above mitigation measure, all potential impacts on cultural resources would be reduced to a *less-than-significant* level.